

PREFACE

WHY ESTABLISH ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY STANDARDS?

The United States Department of Education requires all states to have English language proficiency standards for students with limited or no English language knowledge, experience, or skills. In response to this federal requirement, the Office of English Language Acquisition Services (OELAS) of the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) has developed English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards for English language learners attending public and charter schools in Arizona. These proficiency standards allow the state of Arizona to gauge student progress in English language mastery and to provide classroom teachers with benchmarks to help focus instruction. The standards are designed for teachers to help English Language Learners (ELLs) to become fluent in English as quickly as possible. Mastery of the Arizona ELP standards helps students to possess a linguistic foundation in English that should allow them to partake more fully in content area instruction such as math, science, and social science.

HOW WERE THE ARIZONA ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY STANDARDS DEVELOPED?

The ADE/OELAS relied heavily on a nationally-acclaimed expert, Susan Pimentel. Pimentel was the key resource in the development of Arizona's K-12, Adult Education, and Early Childhood Education standards. Her intimate knowledge of Arizona's educational system and standards made her uniquely qualified to produce the initial draft of the ELP standards.

The preliminary draft standards were examined by a small team of national and local experts, including Linda Siegel, Deborah Rhein, and several staff members of the ADE/OELAS and the ADE/Academic Standards and Accountability Division. Siegel is Associate Dean of the Education Faculty at the University of British Columbia and a member of the U.S. National Literacy Panel for the Study of Literacy in Language (Minority Children and Youth). She is considered an expert in language development. Rhein, of Arizona, has worked extensively in the field of English learner education. Pimentel's team studied current ELL research and examined ELP standards developed by other states and educational entities. Standards from Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, New York, California, Virginia, and Canada were primary resources in the development of Arizona's ELP standards.

Upon completion of the initial draft of the ELP standards, six regional focus groups were conducted in Chinle, Flagstaff, Mesa, Tucson, Yuma, and West Phoenix from October 6 – 10, 2003. These locations and the school districts represented were selected because of their high concentrations of ELL students. Districts were asked to identify representatives who could attend their designated focus group. Focus group packets were sent to all participants two weeks prior to scheduled sessions.

In Chinle, participants represented Holbrook, Ganado, Kayenta, Window Rock, Pinon, Red Mesa, and Chinle; in Flagstaff, participants represented Sanders, Tuba City, Camp Verde, Bullhead City, Cottonwood-Oak Creek, Snowflake, Humboldt, Page, Whiteriver, Sedona-Oak



Creek Joint, and Flagstaff; in Mesa Unified, participants represented San Carlos, Casa Grande, Paradise Valley, Gilbert, Scottsdale, Creighton, Cartwright, Tempe, Chandler and Mesa; in Sunnyside USD, focus group participants represented Tucson USD, Nogales USD, Santa Cruz Valley, Eloy, Naco, Amphitheater, Willcox, Douglas, Marana, Indian Oasis-Baboquivari, Sahaurita, Flowingwells and Sunnyside; in Yuma Union, members of the focus group represented Yuma ESD, Ajo, Crane, Antelope, Somerton, Gadsden and Yuma UHSD; and, in West Phoenix, participants represented Roosevelt, Isaac, Alhambra, Buckeye, Dysart, Phoenix Union, Osborn, Washington, Balsz, Chino Valley, and Murphy ESD. Approximately 75 educators participated in this first round of regional focus groups. Among the participants were ELL coordinators, ELL teachers, principals, directors of federal programs, one superintendent, assistant superintendents, Indian Education coordinators, ELL testers, and members of the Central Arizona Bilingual Consortium.

OELAS staff also sent a survey and drafts of the ELP standards to 100 participants of the Central Arizona Bilingual Consortium for their review and feedback. Substantive feedback was received by both focus group and Consortium participants. A new standards draft was completed in November 2003. From December 10 - 18, 2003, a second set of regional focus groups was conducted in the same locations with the same participants. Approximately 40 participants attended this second round of focus groups. The field response was extremely positive and supportive. Information attained from the six regional focus groups was compiled and final revisions were made to the ELP standards. The Arizona State Board of Education approved the K-12 English Language Proficiency Standards on January 26, 2004.

HOW DO THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY STANDARDS CORRESPOND TO ARIZONA'S K-12 LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS?

The ELP Standards combine the principles of language development and second language learning necessary to achieve Arizona's academic standards and to acquire language necessary for practical, academic, and social interactions. They are not a supplement to Arizona's K-12 Language Arts Standards. Rather, the English Language Proficiency Standards encompass and align with Arizona's Language Arts Standards. In many cases, the descriptors for the K-12 Language Arts Standards and the ELP Standards are the same, especially at the higher levels of performance in each stage of proficiency.

Although the Language Arts and English Language Proficiency Standards are aligned, they are significantly different in three ways. The ELP Standards:

- (1) are a springboard to Language Arts and other content area standards, (they provide the language knowledge and skills students need for high levels of academic performance in core academic areas);
- (2) highlight the crucial role of using language in meaningful and authentic exchanges, beyond the academic environment, and include social and practical settings; and,
- (3) are proficiency or performance standards, not content standards.

Content standards, such as the Arizona K-12 Language Arts Standards, define what learners must know and be able to do. ***Performance standards determine the degree to which content standards have been attained.*** In addition to defining what skills and concepts students must know and be able to do, the ELP Standards provide auxiliary explanation about the consistency, complexity, range, and depth with which students execute the performance expectations. They define not only what a student knows and is able to do, but how well a student demonstrates specific skills and knowledge by indicating the quality of the student's performance.

HOW ARE THE ELP STANDARDS DESIGNED TO BE READ AND USED BY EDUCATORS?

The ELP Standards are organized within three broad domains: **Reading, Writing, and Listening & Speaking**. Each domain has **four** components: an introductory statement, five stages of proficiency, performance condition summaries, and five levels of performance. Within each of the five performance levels are performance indicators.

Each domain begins with an introductory statement. The introductory statement gives information about the characteristics of students who are learning English, specifically students who are at the beginning stage. These statements are designed as a quick review for teachers to help them to better design their English language instruction.

Each domain defines five stages of proficiency. The proficiency standards indicators in each domain build cognitively from the earliest developmental level to English proficiency through five stages of proficiency -- ELL I through ELL V. These stages are organized in a loose developmental progression.

- ELL I is correlated to Kindergarten.
- ELL II is correlated to grades 1-2.
- ELL III is correlated to grades 3-5.
- ELL IV is correlated to grades 6-8.
- ELL V is correlated to grades 9-12.

During the enrollment process, students are generally placed in their age-appropriate grades. If a student's parents mark on the home language survey that the primary language used in the home is a language other than English, regardless of the language spoken by the student, or that the language most often spoken by the student is a language other than English, or that the student's first acquired language is a language other than English, then the student is administered the Arizona English Language Learner Assessment (AZELLA). The purpose of the AZELLA is to determine the student's English language proficiency.



Students are tested within their age-appropriate test band. For example, a sixth grade student is tested using the AZELLA Middle Grades Test for sixth through eighth grade students. There is no "off grade" AZELLA testing. There are five AZELLA levels of English language proficiency: Pre-Emergent, Emergent, Basic, Intermediate, and Proficient. Students who do not receive an overall composite score of "Proficient" on the AZELLA are designated English language learners. Once students are identified as ELLs, they are placed in their age and grade-appropriate Structured English Immersion (SEI) classrooms and receive English Language Development (ELD) instruction based on their levels of English language proficiency.

Each stage of proficiency provides a summary of performance conditions. Performance conditions are provided for each of the five proficiency stages. These summaries provide a snapshot of the skills and abilities that students at this stage of proficiency demonstrate. They also outline the context in which students' language proficiency ability or "performance" can be displayed.

Each stage of proficiency also includes the performance standard and five different levels of performance. The five levels of performance within each stage of proficiency are: Beginning, Early Intermediate, Intermediate, Early Advanced, and Advanced. Within each performance level are **performance indicators**. Each performance indicator is a statement of the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities expected to be mastered by the average student who is receiving ELD instruction. The Beginning level introduces new skills and knowledge and proceeds across the performance continuum. Individual concepts advance in complexity at each new level of performance. Advanced level skills, abilities, and knowledge correlate to at-grade level Language Arts content objectives. At-grade level correlations are listed below.

- The **advanced level** in ELL I correlates to on-grade **Kindergarten**.
- The **advanced level** for ELL II correlates to on-grade **2nd grade**.
- The **advanced level** for ELL III correlates to on-grade **5th grade**.
- The **advanced level** for ELL IV correlates to on-grade **8th grade**.
- The **advanced level** for ELL V correlates to on-grade **12th grade**.

Test results from AZELLA determine the English proficiency level of all ELL students. Once teachers receive the AZELLA test results for their ELL students, teachers begin ELD instruction based on the individual student’s language proficiency. Initial placement marks the beginning, and student progress is measured from this starting placement. Mastery of the skills, knowledge, and abilities at one level of performance assumes mastery of the competencies of all of the preceding levels. Therefore, if a student is performing at the Advanced level in ELL II, the student must already have mastered all of the competencies included in the Beginning through Early Advanced levels. If a student is performing at the Intermediate level, the student must have mastered all of the competencies included in the Beginning through Early Intermediate levels.

The use of bold and italics within the standards. Within the standards’ document, **bold** letters are used within the performance indicators to identify words defined in the **Glossary**. *Italic* letters are used within the performance indicators to identify examples.

HOW WILL EDUCATORS KNOW WHICH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY OBJECTIVES ARE CORRELATED TO ACADEMIC LANGUAGE ARTS CONTENT OBJECTIVES?

Correlations Guides have been developed to assist teachers. These guides correlate the ELP Standards to Arizona’s academic Language Arts



Standards. ELP standards for Listening & Speaking are correlated by grade clusters (i.e., Readiness – Kindergarten, Foundations – grades 1-3, Essentials – grades 4-8, and Proficiency and Distinction – grades 9-12) because the corresponding academic Listening and Speaking standards are grade clustered. The ELP Reading and Writing standards are correlated by grade to the Reading and Writing academic standards.

The purpose of the **Correlations Guides** is to provide educators with a benchmark of their students’ English language proficiency in relation to the grade equivalent academic Language Arts standards for native or proficient English-speaking students. This information can be used to inform ELD instruction. Students may be performing “on-grade” on some of the English language performance indicators and “in process” on other indicators. The **Correlation Guides** are not a reclassification guide. The Arizona English Language Learner Assessment determines ELL student reclassification.

In addition to the **Correlations Guides**, the Arizona Language Arts content standards have been referenced, where appropriate, within the English Language Proficiency Standards.

Correlation guides for the ELP Standards to the Arizona Language Arts standards for Listening and Speaking, Reading, and Writing can be found on the Arizona Department of Education’s Website, www.azed.gov In order to locate the guides, go to the Office of English Language Acquisition

Services tab, and click on it. Once on the OELAS page, scroll down to the English Language Learner Proficiency Standards heading. The standards and correlations guides are listed by domain.

CAN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY STANDARDS ACCOMMODATE ELL STUDENTS WHO MAY NOT ENTER SCHOOL IN THE UNITED STATES UNTIL LATER IN THEIR SCHOOL CAREERS?

Yes. Like the general school population, ELL students are diverse. Some students arrive in the United States with a high level of proficiency in their first language. Others are illiterate or minimally literate. Some students have had prior schooling in English. Others have had limited or no schooling in English.

In Arizona, five stages of English proficiency have been defined for English language learners. These stages are labeled ELL I through ELL V. Within each of these stages, standards have been developed for reading, writing, and oral communication (listening and speaking). ELL students begin their instruction at one stage and proceed through the remaining stages as rapidly as possible until they demonstrate sufficient at-grade level skills and are reclassified. ELL students in Arizona are assigned to a stage of learning based on the following criteria:

- (1) the student's level of proficiency in English; and,
- (2) the student's age and grade.



There is an intentional overlap of skills from one ELL stage to the next ELL stage. This means that many higher ELL I skills (i.e., ELL I Early Advanced, Advanced) recur in the lower end of ELL II (i.e., ELL II Beginning, Early Intermediate), many higher ELL II skills recur in the lower end of ELL III, etc. It is possible for a single stage of learning, ELL I, to include students from 5 to 18 years old. In order to meet the social, emotional, and experiential diversity of students, teachers need to select appropriate instructional materials and instructional strategies that align with the age and maturity of the students in their classes.

CAN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY STANDARDS BE USED WITH SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS?

The ELP Standards provide a comprehensive range and sequence of skills required for English language development. Educators can use these standards in conjunction with Arizona's functional standards to develop individual student plans for children who have exceptional learning needs. Special needs children may enter and progress at any performance level of the continuum within each standard. In some cases, children with exceptional learning needs may require additional accommodations and modifications of the ELP Standards in order to benefit from them.

These standards are also adaptable for gifted special needs children who have limited or no English language proficiency. Educators of gifted children can use the ELP Standards in conjunction with Arizona's K-12 academic Language Arts standards to appropriately modify the instructional program to reflect the educational and developmental progress of these students.

WHAT ARE THE ARIZONA REQUIREMENTS FOR ELL STUDENTS TO ACHIEVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY?

Arizona state law has established an English Language Learners Task Force (ELL TF) to develop models of Structured English Immersion (SEI) for use by school districts and charter schools. First year ELLs must receive a minimum of four hours per day of English language development instruction. The Task Force approved SEI models have ELD instruction divided into four separate one-hour discrete language blocks, including English grammar. As an essential component of the SEI models, a Discrete Skills Inventory (DSI) has been developed that is consistent with these ELP Standards. When the DSI is used, ELL students are taught language skills that are essential to the mastery of these proficiency standards. These standards and the DSI are two key ELD instructional elements ELL students need to achieve English proficiency.



Proficiency is determined by ELL student scores on the Arizona English Language Learner Assessment. The AZELLA is administered to all new students whose primary home language is other than English (PHLOTE) upon entry into an Arizona school to determine appropriate classroom placement based on the students' English language proficiencies. AZELLA is also administered at least yearly at the end of the academic year to determine student progress toward English language proficiency. The SEI program is not normally intended to exceed one year. ELL students who do not become proficient in one year will continue to receive at least four hours per day of English language development, with a few exceptions that are indicated in the ELL TF SEI Models. The AZELLA is in alignment with the English Language Proficiency Standards and measures student proficiency in Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking.